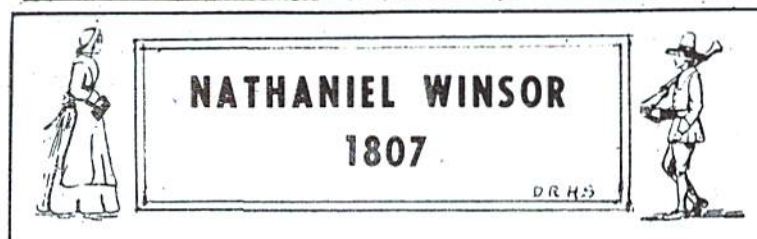


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The first house to be "plaqued" will be the house owned by Dr. and Mrs. Edwin P. Leonard, Jr., at the corner of Washington St. and Mattakeesett Court.

It was built by Nathaniel Winsor in 1807. Winsor, who had a boat yard nearby and one of the first wharves in Duxbury, was by trade a carver of figure-heads and blocks for ships. The open wells in the large, three-story house enabled ship carpenters to make masts inside the house.

After building up a successful fishing fleet that made him and his brother Joshua wealthy, Nathaniel Winsor, at the age of 60, moved into the house he built in 1807. Unusual features include a circular stairway and an elegant entrance, both thought to be of Bulfinch design. Another contemporary architect believed to be responsible for such features as the palladian front windows and door was Asher Benjamin, author of reference books on design and construction which were widely used by ship carpenters of Duxbury, who used to spread out the books on the lawn while carrying out Benjamin's plans. It is likely that ideas and designs of both Bulfinch and Benjamin are incorporated in this historic house.

A secret stairway in the rear of the house led to a second floor room. Some of the stairs, still in place, may be seen through a trap door. The original kitchen, with Dutch oven, is now the dining room.

Many descendants of the original owners still live in Duxbury.

This structure has been a residence, boarding house and hotel, at various times. On a Duxbury map of 1903 it is labeled "Hotel." It once had a porch or piazza complete with rocking chairs. Daniel Webster, who used to shop for rum and other essentials of nineteenth century living, is reputed to have preached from the front stoop. The house was fenced to keep stray cattle from the door yard. An excerpt from Winsor's HISTORY OF DUXBURY, concerning Revolutionary Maritime Annals, mentions activities of Nathaniel Winsor around 1778:

"The English forty gunship "Chatham" took the schooner "Olive," belonging to Capt. Nathaniel Winsor, by whom she was at that time commanded and manned by William Winsor, Thomas Sampson and Lot Hunt. They were finally released on parole with the loss of their mainsail, which the enemy retained."

(The committee, headed by Garvin Bawden, which is researching early-period houses, has geographical distribution in mind. Houses checked by the committee will bear tablets with the name of the original owner, date of construction, and, in the lower right corner, the initials, DRHS, indicating that the facts have been approved by the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society.)